



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Washington DC 20420

March 12, 2019

Mr. Austin Evers  
American Oversight  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> NW Suite B255  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: Freedom of Information Act Tracking Number 19-04686-F

Dear Mr. Evers:

This letter responds to your February 14, 2019 request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 5 U.S.C §552 to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Your request was referred to the Office of Finance on March 7, 2019. In your letter, you requested the following:

"All records reflecting communications (including email messages, email attachments, calendar invitations, memoranda or background material for meetings, or handwritten or typed notes taken during meetings) between any political appointees\* at your agency and any employee or representative of Ballard Partners, including, but not limited to, any of the following individuals:

- a) Any individual using an email address ending in ballardfl.com,
- b) Brian Ballard,
- c) Sylvester Lukis,
- d) Susan "Susie" Wiles,
- e) Dan McFaul,
- f) Rebecca Benn,
- g) Justin Sayfie,
- h) James "Jamie" Rubin,
- i) Otto Reich,
- j) Raj Shah,
- k) Pam Bondi,
- l) Robert Wexler,
- m) Jose Felix Diaz,
- n) Katherine San Pedro,
- o) Karl Bowers,
- p) Sara Pennington,
- q) Hannah Walters, or
- r) Sara Nuvy."

The Office of Finance has no records responsive to your request. This office has no political appointees as defined in your correspondence.

The Freedom of Information Statute, 5 U.S.C. §552 (A) (4) (a) (II), places all FOIA requesters in one of several categories for fee purposes. The categories of FOIA requesters are commercial use requesters; educational institutions; non-commercial scientific institutions; representatives of the news media; and all other requesters.

We have determined your organization falls within the category of all other requesters and therefore waive any fees.

If you disagree with the determination, please be advised you may appeal to:

Office of General Counsel (024)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420

If you should choose to file an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked no later than ninety (90) calendar dates from the date of this letter. Please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly state why you disagree with the determinations set forth in this response.

In addition to filing an appeal with the Office of General Counsel regarding this determination, you may also seek assistance regarding your FOIA request from VACO FOIA Public Liaison and or Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as provided below:

Department of Veterans Affairs  
VA FOIA Public Liaison (005R1)  
810 Vermont Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20420  
Email: [vacofoiaservice@va.gov](mailto:vacofoiaservice@va.gov)  
Telephone: 877-750-3642  
Fax: 202-632-7581

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)  
National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Rd  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Fax: 202-741-5769

This response closes FOIA 19-04686-F. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-461-6183.

Sincerely,



Julie Schroeder  
FOIA Officer  
Office of Finance



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
Washington DC 20420



February 12, 2019

Mr. Austin Evers  
American Oversight  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite B255  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated February 14, 2019, in which you requested "All records reflecting communications (including email messages, email attachments, calendar invitations, memoranda or background material for meetings, or handwritten or typed notes taken during meetings) between any political appointees\* at your agency and any employee or representative of Ballard Partners, including, but not limited to, any of the following individuals:

- a) Any individual using an email address ending in ballardfl.com,
- b) Brian Ballard,
- c) Sylvester Lukis,
- d) Susan "Susie" wiles,
- e) Dan McFaul,
- f) Rebecca Benn,
- g) Justin Sayfie,
- h) James "Jamie" Rubin,
- i) Otto Reich,
- j) Raj shah,
- k) Pam Bondi,
- l) Robert Wexler,
- m) Jose Felix Diaz,
- n) Katherine San Pedro,
- o) Karl Bowers,
- p) Sara Pennington,
- q) Hannan Walters, or
- r) Sara Nuvy."

Your request was referred to the Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs on **March 14, 2019**.

Your request has been assigned FOIA Tracking Number **19-04679-F**. Please refer to it whenever communicating with this office about your request.

Please be advised that no responsive records pertaining to your request were located within the Office of Congressional & Legislative Affairs.

Your request was processed by the undersigned. You may appeal the "no records" determination made in this response to:

General Counsel (024)  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20420

If you should choose to make an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked no later than sixty (60) calendar days after the date of the adverse determination. It must clearly identify the determination being appealed and must include any assigned request number.

The appeal should include:

1. The name of the FOIA Officer
2. The address of the component
3. The date of the component's determination, if any
4. The precise subject matter of the appeal

If you choose to appeal only a portion of the determination, you must specify which part of the determination you are appealing.

The appeal should include a copy of the request and VA's response, if any. The appeal should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal".

Sincerely,



**Regina Mack-Abney**  
FOIA Officer





DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
OFFICE OF OPERATIONS SECURITY AND PREPAREDNESS  
OFFICE OF SECURITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT  
WASHINGTON DC 20420

April 10, 2019

Mr. Austin Evers  
American Oversight  
1030 15<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Suite B255  
Washington, DC 20005

Re: FOIA #19-04682-F

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is in response to your February 14, 2019, FOIA request to the Department of Veterans Affairs requesting "All records reflecting communications (including email messages, email attachments, calendar invitation, memoranda or background material for meetings, or handwritten or typed notes taken during meetings) between any political appointees\* at your agency and any employee or representative of Ballard Partners, including, but not limited to, any of the following individuals:

- a) Any individual using an email address ending in ballardfl.com,
- b) Brian Ballard,
- c) Sylvester Lukis,
- d) Susan "Susie" Wiles,
- e) Dan McFaul,
- f) Rebecca Benn,
- g) Justin Sayfie,
- h) James "Jamie" Rubin,
- i) Ottto Reich,
- j) Raj Shah,
- k) Pam Bondi,
- l) Robert Wexler,
- m) Jose Felix Diaz,
- n) Katherine San Pedro,
- o) Karl Bowers,
- p) Sara Pennington,
- q) Hannah Walters, or
- r) Sara Nuvy"

This request was assigned to the Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness on March 7, 2019. The records search has now been completed; however, no records were found that match those of your request.

In the event you would wish to appeal this determination, please send the appeal to the Office of General Counsel within ninety (90) calendar days of the date of this letter to:

Office of General Counsel (OGC/024)  
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC, 20420  
Email to [ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov](mailto:ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov).  
Fax: (202-273-6388)

As an alternative to an appeal, you may contact VA FOIA Public Liaison, which was created to offer mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and VA. Using this method does not affect your right to appeal. You may contact:

VA FOIA Public Liaison  
Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20420.  
Email: [vafoiaservice@va.gov](mailto:vafoiaservice@va.gov),  
Phone: (877) 750-3642  
Fax: (202) 632-7581

Also, the office of Government Information Services (OGIS) offers mediation services to resolve disputes between persons making requests and administrative agencies as a nonexclusive alternative to litigation and, at the discretion of the OGIS, may issue advisory options if mediation has not resolved the dispute. The OGIS is at:

National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740  
Email: [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov)  
Phone: (877) 684-6448  
Fax: (202) 741-5769.

Sincerely



Tanya Al-Khateeb  
Program Analyst  
Operations, Security, and Preparedness  
Office of Security and Law Enforcement